CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 22 JANUARY 2001 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT MADE ON 11 JANUARY 2001 BY THE BULGARIAN DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AT A MEETING WITH MILITARY AND DEFENCE ATTACHES

I have the honour to transmit enclosed herewith the text of a statement made on January 11, 2001 by the Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Defence at a meeting with Military and Defence Attaches.

I would be grateful if you would issue this text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distribute it to all Member States and observer States of the CD.

(Signed) Petko Draganov
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Bulgaria
to the Conference on Disarmament

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STATEMENT

By Deputy Minister of Defence at a meeting with Military and Defence Attachés
Sofia, 11 January 2001

In accordance with its consistent policy of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, Republic of Bulgaria ratified on July 29, 1998 the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their destruction (Ottawa Convention). On September 16, 1999 a National Program for the implementation of the Convention was adopted by the Bulgarian Government. It comprises all details concerning the destruction of the stockpiles of antipersonnel mines, the demining of the minefields and the financing of these activities. An Inter-agency working group under the chairmanship of a Deputy Minister of Defence was established to control the implementation of the Program.

The National Program was successfully implemented. Let me mention the most significant achievements in this respect:

- by October 30, 1999 all minefields on the territory of Bulgaria have been cleared and antipersonnel mines have been destroyed. During the period 1997-1999, 68 antipersonnel minefields were cleared and 13 926 antipersonnel mines, type PSM-1 have been destroyed on the spot. A total of 13 364 acres were set mine-free.

- by the end of 1999 the Ministry of Defence handed-over all its stockpiled antipersonnel mines to DUNARIT Company and TEREM Company. It is my pleasure to announce today that by December 20, 2000 a total of 881 970 antipersonnel mines were destroyed by these companies and Bulgaria became a 100% antipersonnel mine-free country.

Bulgaria has assumed a firm commitment both at national and international levels to combat the landmines threat and is ready to provide full support and assistance to all relevant efforts aiming at the complete and universal abolition of antipersonnel mines. In this context Bulgaria reiterates its readiness to provide experts to participate in the global destruction of antipersonnel mines. The specialized enterprises, which have the capacity and an original technology, are ready to participate in such operations.